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Environment Department Advises “BOIL WATER ORDER” for La Jara Water Users Association

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department’s (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau has advised the La Jara Water Users Association to issue a “boil water order” for the community it serves.

The La Jara Water Users Association serves approximately 325 consumers and is located about five miles north of Cuba. This system was put on a “boil water order” on June 4, 2004 due to turbidity that exceeded the maximum limit. NMED requires that the Association notify all consumers served by the water system of this finding.

Users of the La Jara WUA water system are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking, and dishwashing.

Seasonal runoff has increased the turbidity levels in the La Jara water system area. Turbidity has no known health effects. However, turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites, which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches.

The La Jara system has increased disinfection. The slow sand filter treatment technique requires pretreatment if raw water quality is not very high. The system is considering several alternatives to improve treatment or increase finished water storage capacity. Additional treatment to improve water quality may increase the cost to produce water.

The Drinking Water Bureau will monitor the water quality and assist the system with evaluating alternatives to improve water quality.

The Department of Health has been notified of this order and will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue. Consumers of the water system may call (505) 476-3028 or 827-0006 if they have any water-related health concerns.

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